

Introduction

Background

Regional planning is a comprehensive process that results in a plan with guiding policies for development and conservation and focuses the community's resources on specific actions to meet community goals. It is about deciding what we want our city and our surrounding unincorporated areas of the county to be like in the future, and charting a course for how we are to get there. The Regional Plan is an expansion of and an update to the existing city and county plans, and brings these existing plans together to deal with the region as a whole.

The regional planning process officially began in early 1998 when a consulting team was hired. City and county staff worked closely with the consulting team throughout the process as a core team, responsible for developing the plan. Over the course of 15 months, the core team prepared an inventory of the existing physical and socio-economic conditions of the region; developed a series of alternative land use and transportation scenarios; identified and discussed key policy issues to be addressed by the plan; prepared a preferred land use and transportation plan; and developed a policy framework (chapter IV of this plan).

Also in early 1998, the City Council and the County Board of Supervisors appointed a Regional Task Force consisting of city and county residents. From May 1998 until July 1999, the Regional Task Force met 24 times in order to accomplish its mission of (1) providing guidance and advice to the project team by identifying issues and concerns in the community; (2) providing input to the planning policies; (3) discussing trade-offs represented by various land use and transportation scenarios, and (4) helping to define and recommend a preferred plan.

During the course of the planning process, open houses were held as opportunities to obtain input from the public. The first open house was held in July 1998 to explain and receive input on the planning process, review issues and provide direction, and review conceptual land use and transportation scenarios.

In February 1999, a comprehensive newsletter and questionnaire were prepared and mailed to all households in the region, providing information on the regional planning process, the upcoming open house, key policy issues, and the three land use scenarios. Over 1,000 questionnaires were returned, providing critical input and direction for the planning process.

Also in February, a second open house was held to review the three land use and transportation scenarios, leading to preparation and finalization of a preferred land use and transportation plan. A third and final open house was held in May 1999 to present and receive public input on the preferred land use and transportation scenario.

Flagstaff, at an elevation of approximately 7,000 feet, is at the base of the highest mountains in Arizona. Situated on the San Francisco Plateau (a subdivision of the Colorado Plateau), the arched highland area forms the summit between the Little Colorado and Verde Rivers. Ten miles to the north lie the San Francisco Mountains, which include Humphreys Peak, the highest point in Arizona at an elevation of 12,633 feet. Further to the north, eighty miles from Flagstaff, is the Grand Canyon.

The terrain slopes gently downward from Flagstaff for thirty miles to the east and northeast into the piñon-juniper vegetation, and then into the sagebrush-covered valley of the Little Colorado

River. To the east lies the multi-colored Painted Desert. To the southeast lies high plateau country. Oak Creek Canyon begins fifteen miles to the south-southwest, connecting to the high plateau and the Verde Valley below.

The planning area encompasses 525 square miles extending north to Sunset Crater, south to the communities of Kachina/Mountainaire, east to Winona, and west to Bellemont.

The Vision 2020 Process

The Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan is based upon the vision established by the citizens and organizations of the Flagstaff area and embodied in *A Vision for our Community—Flagstaff 2020*. Over an eighteen-month period in 1996 and 1997, thousands of Flagstaff citizens participated in a wide-ranging discussion about the future of this city. Through public meetings, surveys, focus groups, and other means of input, the community envisioned and plotted its future course to the year 2020.

The 2020 vision process engaged the greater Flagstaff community in thinking about where Flagstaff is today, where the community would like to be in the future, and how to get there. The outcome was that “in the year 2020 the people of greater Flagstaff have much to celebrate: their quality of life is a reality that many communities only dream of. The downtown is thriving; the economy is healthy; and the sense of community is solid and strong. Family life is supported in myriad ways—from health care to education to recreation. Individuals are appreciated for who they are and can find opportunities throughout their lives to learn, grow and achieve their dreams.”

This new, joint city-county Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan will guide the community toward the future it prefers in the year 2020. This plan advances the process in which the greater Flagstaff community created a vision, goals, and action plans that will balance social well-being, economic health and environmental quality in the ongoing growth and development of the community.

How This Plan is Organized

The Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan is organized into five primary sections, which are briefly described below.

Policy Framework

The Policy Framework establishes the basic policy direction for the region in nine categories: Land Use and Growth Management; Housing and Neighborhoods; Commercial Development; Industry and Employment; Transportation; Open Spaces, Parks, and Trails; Community Character and Design; Natural and Cultural Resources and the Environment; and Community Facilities and Services. The framework helps define the fundamental principles and basic policy choices necessary to guide growth and development of the region. For each category, the Policy Framework includes a set of goals, each goal supported by a set of policies to be pursued in attaining the goal, and strategies that outline specific measures to be taken in implementing the policy to which they relate.

Land Use Plan

The Regional Land Use Plan is designed to accommodate the projected population for the city and county of 103,743 in the year 2020. This represents an increase of 33,152 from the current population of 70,591, which equates to approximately 13,000 new households, of which approximately 9,500 are in the city and 3,500 in the county.

The Regional and City Land Use Plan Maps identify land uses for all areas within the Flagstaff MPO, although it should be noted that land uses as shown on the Land Use Maps are not meant to be precisely parcel-specific.

The Land Use Plan section also includes a Framework Plan, which illustrates a future region made up of four basic kinds of places: districts, activity centers, commercial corridors, and open lands. The organization of these places—their “structure”—gives meaning and form to the goals, policies, and strategies established in the Policy Framework.

Transportation Plan

The Transportation Plan is designed to achieve a balanced reliance on multiple transportation modes: single-occupant vehicles, multi-occupant vehicles, public transit, bicycling, and walking. This balance will enable the Flagstaff metropolitan area to attain high levels of mobility and accessibility while preserving community character and quality of life. The Transportation Plan includes a Roadway System Plan, a Transit System Plan, and Non-Motorized Systems Plans for trails and bikeways.

Systems Plans

This chapter includes systems plans for Water, Wastewater, Stormwater, Fire Protection, Parks, and Schools. These vital facilities and service systems support the land uses and patterns as projected on the Land Use City and Regional Plans.

Implementation Action Plan

The Implementation Action Plan defines how each goal and policy identified in the Policy Framework will be implemented. The Action Plan indicates the actions to be taken, the party or parties primarily responsible for implementing the major plan strategies, and the time frame within which the action should be initiated.

Appendixes

In addition to the elements described above, the plan includes the following appendixes:

Appendix A—Planning Influences is a summary of the factors affecting land use and development in the Flagstaff region, including regional influences, physical environment, open lands, land use patterns, public facilities and services, transportation, and demographic and economic trends and projections.

Appendix B—Alternative Land Use Scenarios summarizes the three land use scenarios that were considered in the preparation of the preferred Regional Land Use Plan.

Appendix C—Plan Amendment Criteria establishes the criteria by which the Urban Growth Boundary, portions of the Rural Growth Boundaries, and designation of certain lands as Planning Reserve Areas may be amended to reflect changing conditions in the region.

Appendix D—Regional Task Force Addendum describes several ideas or policies about which the Regional Task Force could not reach substantive consensus or about which the Regional Task Force and Core Planning Team could not reach agreement.

Appendix E—Area and Master Plans List is a list of area and master plans currently in use by city and county departments. Following the adoption of this plan, it is expected that many of these plans will be revised as appropriate in conformance with the policies and strategies that this plan contains.